

The Honorable Christine Gregoire
Governor of the State of Washington
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

SUBJECT: GJJAC 2008 Annual Juvenile Justice Report

Dear Governor Gregoire:

On behalf of the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (GJJAC), I am pleased to present our 2008 Annual Report. It is a summary of juvenile justice issues in Washington and includes information on the challenges and opportunities facing our young people, their families and communities. This year's Report includes a GJJAC Policy Brief published this past year, focusing on the effectiveness surrounding the seven Washington Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) sites. JDAI focuses on local jurisdictions following 8 core principles that ensure policy development of alternatives to the use of secure detention for certain youth. There are currently 110 JDAI sites across the country located in 27 different states.

In the fall of 2008 members of the GJJAC worked to identify and reaffirm priorities for the comprehensive 3-year juvenile justice plan which was submitted to the federal Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in the spring of 2009. The priorities include: status offenders and non-offenders; disproportionate minority contact in the juvenile justice system; and system improvement efforts and initiatives, including the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, restorative justice, and local community juvenile justice coordination. Additionally, identified focus areas include: gang prevention and intervention, mental health, gender specific services for girls, and strengthening the juvenile justice system in rural and underserved areas.

The GJJAC recognizes that while there has been an overall decline in recent years in juvenile arrests, admissions to detention facilities and to juvenile rehabilitation administration residential facilities, minority youth continue to be disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system. The GJJAC continues to work collaboratively with local juvenile justice systems and other youth-serving organizations to address disproportionate minority contact.

In March 2009 the GJJAC hosted a two-day conference at SeaTac, Washington: "In All Fairness: Working with Minority Youth and Youth in Poverty to Transform the Juvenile Justice System." The conference was co-sponsored by the Center for Children & Youth Justice, Annie E. Casey Foundation, DSHS Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, and federal OJJDP. Over 300 participants from across the state attended this comprehensive, multi-track conference, which addressed the interaction of disproportionate minority contact in the juvenile justice system, juvenile detention alternatives, and poverty. The goal of the conference was to lay the foundation to begin understanding the interaction of race, culture and poverty, and how these factors drive/influence decision-making in the juvenile justice system -- the conference was very well received.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the successes and challenges our youth and communities face, and we look forward to working with you in this upcoming year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kari Grytdal".

Kari Grytdal, GJJAC Chair